Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: JAN 0 3 2014

From: Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Preferential Procurement of non-High Enriched Uranium-Derived Medical Isotopes

To: Network Directors (10N1-23)

1. The White House Interagency Policy Committee has requested that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) preferentially procure medical radioisotopes from non-High Enriched Uranium (HEU) sources. The reason for this request is that transportation and storage of HEU by radioisotope vendors may be a security and nuclear proliferation risk. VA's leadership in the transition to non-HEU radioisotope production will improve national security, promote the creation of domestic suppliers of medical radioisotopes, and will ultimately reduce the United States' reliance on foreign sources. In support of this important initiative, I am asking you to purchase non-HEU derived isotopes when they become commercially available.

2. The principal radioisotope manufactured using HEU is Technectium-99m (Tc-99m). In fiscal year 2012, VA administered 366,000 doses of Tc-99m at an average cost per dose of $56. Conversion of production to non-HEU is estimated to increase the cost to $70 per dose, resulting in an increase of $5.2 million per year. The total estimated VA cost per year for non-HEU Tc-99m labeled doses will be $26 million.

3. As a point of clarification, VA does not purchase uranium. The radioisotope vendors purchase uranium to generate Tc-99m. Whether Tc-99m is made with HEU or non-HEU, the radioisotope is the same. Therefore, transition to a non-HEU vendor will not otherwise affect your operations.

4. Please notify all Veterans Health Administration Veterans Integrated Service Network Chief Medical Officers, Quality Management Officers, Chiefs of Staff, and facility nuclear medicine staff to begin preferential procurement of Tc-99m produced from non-HEU sources as adequate supplies become available. Doses currently available should be expended. Dr. Milton Gross, National Nuclear Medicine Director, will inform the field of potential non-HEU derived Tc-99m sources.

5. Questions should be addressed to Dr. Gross by phone at (734) 845-3396 or by e-mail at Milton.Gross2@va.gov.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.